

volume six, spring 2008 issue

# New. Voices

*a collection of student writings*



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# New. *Voices*

*a collection of student writings*

Congratulations to the writing students at the Ivy Tech Community College who are published in this sixth issue of *New Voices*.

This collection is a representative sample from the classes on the Indianapolis and Lawrence campuses. All departments and students may submit manuscripts for publication. (See page 76). *New Voices* regrets it is unable to include all submissions.

The faculty members whose students contributed manuscripts and material are commended for their support and assistance.

Special thanks to the Student Editorial Advisory Board

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## How I Learned to Play Chess

by Candice Reeves

My two older brothers, Frank and Floyd, were in the living room with my dad, playing chess. My mother was at work. All my friends could not come over to play with me that particular day. I was a curious five-year-old who needed to be watched at all times, but that did not occur to my father. The men in the house were too busy with their game to pay any attention to me.

That beautiful spring day, I decided to play beauty shop. I gathered all my dolls and moved into the bathroom, which was filled with the smell of bleach from my mother cleaning it earlier that day. After five long minutes, I grew bored with doing my dolls' hair and decided to do my own.

The house was completely silent except for the occasional sound of plastic chess pieces being moved. I knew it would be awhile before my dad would send one of my brothers to check on me, and I wanted to have my hair done before then.

I opened the cabinets under the bathroom sink and pulled out all of my mother's combs, brushes, and hair products. First, I combed and brushed my hair until it hung to my shoulders. I then took a handful of hair grease and rubbed it all in my hair until the light reflected off my hair from all the grease.

It was at that moment that I remembered the hairstyle that I had admired so much – the Jheri Curl. I figured that if I put enough of my mother's hair products into my hair that I would get the style I wanted. I took my mother's hairspray and sprayed it all around my head, as I remembered my mother doing countless times while

doing her own hair. Now I was covered by a nasty-smelling cloud that seeped into my mouth, making it taste like cotton. I then gazed into the mirror and noticed that the hairspray made my hair dull and dry, not wet and greasy like the style I admired.

I reached for a pink bottle that I thought was the pink moisturizing lotion that my mother used on my hair all the time. If I had known how to read, I would have seen that the bottle did not say moisturizing lotion, but Nair, a hair removal lotion.

I poured a large amount of the lotion into my hand and massaged it all through my hair. For the finishing touch, I placed a shower cap on my head as I had seen others with a Jheri Curl do.

It was not until my mother got home from work when my father and brothers realized what I have been doing with my time. My mother walked up to me and snatched the shower cap off of my head. Strands and chunks of hair showered all around me, leaving me with a very short Afro, not my beloved Jheri Curl.

After that day, my mother refused to let my father and brothers baby-sit for me until we all moved to Indianapolis from Terre Haute and I started kindergarten. That was also when my father forced me to stay at his side whenever he and my brothers played chess. As I watched them, I began to learn all the pieces to the chess game and learned how each piece moved. After awhile, my father would allow me to set up the board so that he and my brothers could play.

It is now twenty years since that eventful, day. I am now an excellent chess player (though I still cannot beat Frank or my father), and it is all due to that day and the Jheri Curl.



**Love, Hope and Faith**



by Cari Nicholson

## Multi-faceted



by Cari Nicholson

## When Life Gave Me Kids, I Made Kool-Aid

by Deelyn Lynch

I never planned on being a wife or a mom. I had every intention of being a successful, single, business woman climbing her way up the corporate ladder. I didn't need a man in my life to protect me or make decisions for me. When I thought of children, it was of spoiling my nieces and nephews; then sending them back to their mother. I envisioned living in a huge, high-rise apartment with professionally designed interiors that were kept clean by a weekly maid. I would eat gourmet fare at expensive restaurants while wearing designer clothes. I would be rich enough to have every luxury my heart could desire, including my dream car, a Lamborghini. I had known what I wanted for my life since I was a freshman in high school; my dreams hadn't changed over many years, so why should I believe they ever would? I have since learned that despite the visions we create for our lives, they seem to change of their own volition sometimes, and the picture you end up with is the one you were meant to have.

A month after my senior year in high school began and before my 18th birthday, I fell in love. This was the man of my dreams and I was going to marry him someday. He was worth foregoing the *single* part of the game plan. This man loved children and his love was contagious. Before we were even engaged, we were discussing the names of our future progeny. When I say future, though, I was imagining many years down the line after I'd established myself in business.

Less than a year after we met and only two months out of high school, we were married. As a couple, we headed to Colorado for me to go to college. Three months into this endeavor, life decided I would be much better suited as a mother and despite using birth-control, we became pregnant. I was ecstatic, and the dreams of the corporate ladder quickly and gladly dissolved into dreams of playgrounds and pony rides.

My first-born, my daughter, was going to be an angel. I envisioned her dressed in ruffles and lace and behaving in every way. Oh, all the stories I could tell that would quickly allay any notion that that happened!

My daughter was a true handful. Her idea of a good time usually involved all manner of messes with engine oil (sitting on the engine while “helping” Daddy and Grandpa fix the car), baby powder (dumping it in the face of her infant brother), and petroleum jelly (finding out it works great as a shiny finger paint). In the dictionary under “tom boy”, you should see a picture of my daughter. Far from the ruffles and lace, mud and food seemed to be her most common attire. In regards to behaving in every way...yeah, usually every way but the good way. Although she’s given me many heart attacks and sleepless nights, my daughter has so far turned into a beautiful young lady of 15. She still doesn’t wear “girly” clothes, and she has the defined attitude of a teenager. I can guarantee that the “angeldom,” I envisioned for her is out. Still, she has so far turned out to be a bright, good kid with her own sense of style.

When my son was born, exactly two and a half years after his sister, I had visions of a “rough and tumble” boy playing sports, getting into all kinds of trouble and being embarrassed by his

mother's affections. He was even born on Super Bowl Sunday, how could he not be all those things?

The boy to whom I gave birth doesn't like to wrestle or play rough. He is gentle and kind-hearted. While growing up, he had a tendency to be more of the angel I had once envisioned of my daughter. He rarely got into things or made messes and he was quick to console me when I was exasperated over his sister. While he is still all-boy, enjoying a good laugh over bodily functions and fighting a bath, he's not into any kind of sports unless you can count video game playing as a sport, then he's into one! He's also quick to give me hugs and tell me he loves me, even in front of his friends. He has the mind of an engineer and can create many cool things. Who needs sports anyway? He has so far turned into a loving, intelligent young man of 12.

Once I lived in a high-rise apartment. It was a 925 square feet, two bedroom stuffed with four people and all our junk. The extent of the interior design was garage-sale chic with hand-me-down furniture and nothing on the walls. I now live in a 1400 square foot, three bedroom ranch that is still too small for the four of us and all of our stuff. It does, however, have the great big yard we sought so the kids could play safely outside. The yard is used by the two mutts we adopted a few years ago while the kids play in the street out front.

My home sports the same interior fashion the apartment did and the maid is obviously non-existent. I do dine out occasionally, although the dinner fare runs more along the lines of Bob Evans as opposed to anything gourmet and I'm usually wearing the jeans and sweatshirt I bought at Wal-Mart on clearance. I am rich in dirty clothes, dirty dishes, school books and hugs. My luxuries consist of

an occasional uninterrupted hot bath and a used 1996 Geo Tracker for which I'm still making payments. My home is small enough to keep my family close; my car is practical for low gas consumption to and from the store; the dogs love having a big yard in which to run, and I don't like sushi anyway.

With that, I tell you, despite the differences between my vision and my reality, I wouldn't change my life for the world. My husband is a hard-working man who makes me smile every day; my kids are fun-loving, intelligent and keep me challenged, and my home is full of love and laughter. My car can fit all four of us, plus some groceries, doesn't cost me a fortune in gas, and I've learned to find luxury in a good bubble bath.

The picture of what you order off the menu may be very different than what you get on your plate, but it still tastes good. Sometimes we choose to revise our plans. Sometimes they're changed against our will, but it's usually because that's how it's meant to be. Although I never intended to be a wife or a mom, the real "me" has been yanked out and paraded before my eyes.

I realize now I would have never been happy as a cold and lonely business woman. Just for the record, though, I do still envision a ladder in my life. On this one, the rungs are made up of the tribulations of life. When we get to the top, my children will have grown into successful adults; my home will be filled with grandchildren, and I'll have enough money to spoil them and send them back to their parents. I'm imagining that's where I'll be anyway, as long as my visions don't get changed too much. When life gave me kids, instead of the occasional lemon I was expecting, I made Kool-Aid.

## **The Ultimatum**

Boy, where were you; where have you been?

Woman, I was hanging out; that's not a sin.

Don't you talk to me like that! Have you lost your mind?

Woman, I'm a man; I don't have to be kind.

Well, you better tell me what's up; what is going on?

Will you quit looking for problems where there are none?

You need to quit sweating me because I'm a man.

I can do what I want because I can.

Boy, let me tell you what is going to go down.

You need to grow up and quit being a clown.

You may think you're a man, but you don't act like one.

You think being grown is just about having fun.

And as for you talking to me any old way,

Boy, I am your mother and for this you will pay!

You need to quit hanging with those no-good hood-rats,

Who stand on corners, thinking they're some cool cats.

They're all chasing women and smoking blunts,

Robbing liquor stores and pulling stupid stunts.

I refuse to support you any more.

This act will cripple you worse than before.

If you're so grown then go get a j-o-b.  
A real man is a provider, not a leech who clings to me.  
You're grown, right; so get your own place.  
You still live with me; so go out and make haste.  
If you're so grown, why don't you pay me rent?  
Oh, I forgot, all the money you had, you spent  
And it wasn't to keep a roof over that hardheaded brain  
But on quick-rich schemes that brought nothing but pain.

Woman, would you leave me alone; I'm not a lost cause.  
I told you that I'm a man; you're no longer the boss.

You may be a man, but it was me who birthed you.  
That automatically makes me the boss of  
just about everything you do.  
So I'm going to say this one thing quick  
And this ultimatum will definitely stick.  
If you stay under my roof,  
you will do the things that I say to do.  
If not, then get out of my damn house;  
the only one who will lose is you.

So it's like that; that's how you want to play?  
Then, fine! I'm gone! You will regret this day!

Yes, you're right; I may regret this decision one day



But I won't forget about you;  
it will be over your lost soul I'll pray  
I will pray that one day you will see the light  
And that you will agree that I was right  
So go ahead; leave and have your fun  
I'll be standing right here when all is said and done  
So I really hope you find what you're looking for  
Because you are no longer a child and  
I refuse to carry you anymore

by Candice Reeves

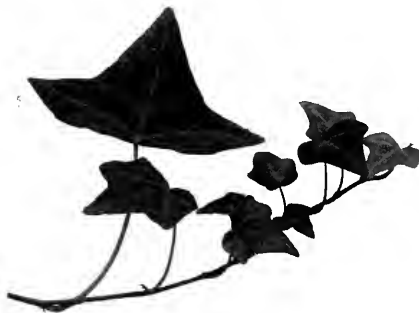
*This rap poem was performed as a one-act play on April 13 and 14, 2007, and presented by the Ivy Tech Community College Odeon Society Drama Club. Ms. Reeves and Mr. Jordan Walker were the performers.*



## Dear One

Always by my side  
Never too far gone  
Always along for the ride  
Together from dusk to dawn  
Good times unceasing  
I know our time is fleeting  
Adulthood calls us away  
Dear one, hold on to today

by Jessica Powers



## My Song: My Mother's Memory

by Rebecca Snyder

The song "Honey, I Miss You," by Bobby Goldsboro, reminds me of my mother. The song tells just about every aspect of her life.

"See the tree how big it's grown." My mother loved to work in the yard. She had many flower beds that she kept up. I sometimes drive by the house where I grew up and some of the rose bushes and trees that she planted are still there. My father would sometimes complain about having to mow around all of the plants, but he really did not mind.

My mother did not graduate from high school, but she is the smartest person I know. She would sit down and help me with my homework. She had the best common sense and good people skills. I do not know of anyone who did not like her. The song says: "She was always young at heart, kinda of dumb and kinda smart." My mother was from the country, so she was not "city smart" like my father, and sometimes my father would make fun of her and hurt her feelings, which would make me angry, but I know he loved her.

My father bought my mother a beagle, as in the song; "and I surprised her with a puppy." We had a few other dogs after that. My mother was good with dogs, and dogs were good with her.

In the song, "One day while I was not at home while she was there and all alone: The angels came." The angels came for my mother while we were there at her bedside. Now all I have are the memories of her and this song that plays in my head. Unfortunately, the song is not played on the radio much anymore, but when I do hear it, it always brings tears — and a smile to my face.

## I Am

I am a solemn nation  
Independent of foreign influence  
Self-sufficient within my limits  
And strong in all crises  
Both political and economical.

I am a jungle warrior  
Hidden among the cobwebs  
Blinded by their darkness,  
Yet I am a strong warrior  
Who sharpens his sword  
Cutting the heads  
Of lions and tigers  
With wisdom and courage.

by Josué Guerrero



## His Coins

by Jillian Burdick

The week before my dad died, my mother and I sat in the expansive living room of our home. The central Florida temperature hovered in the mid-40s; it was chilly for the end of February and the outside wind coaxed errant yellow leaves into our hardwood-floored parlor through the open front door. The cold wasn't the only reason for the goosebumps that crawled over the youthful skin of my arms. Dad had been in the hospital for several days; as a ten-year-old, I had been forced to watch the cancer ravage my father's once-hardy body.

The failing midday light cast shadows to dance along our walls, sweeping over the heavy oak furniture that once belonged to my grandparents. Drawing in a slow, measured breath of control, I drank my mother's familiar voice into my ears.

"It isn't a matter of if, Jillian. It's a matter of when," she whispered in a tender, subdued tone. Her words were deliberately spaced, as if the fragility of her tone would somehow lessen the impact of her words. I sank into the softness of the olive merino of our sofa, drawing my knees to my chest before coiling my arms about them. My gaze shifted lazily around the room, first fixing on the console television that dominated the cream-painted west wall of the room.

As if by habit, my eyes fell to the battered tawny corduroy cushion lying on the floor in front of it. Purchased with a sofa many years prior, it had become my dad's favorite object in our home. I half-expected to see him sprawled languidly atop it, watching reruns

of “The Three Stooges.” I resisted the urge to grab the pillow — to clutch it close and breathe in the heady scent of his aftershave. I shuddered visibly, my narrow shoulders hunching into my knees as I lowered to rest my chin atop them. This place no longer felt like home. This, my favorite room, was becoming an empty space to be filled with memories.

“It’s time for you to decide what it is you want of his,” she whispered, floating a cool hand to brush a stray lock of strawberry-blond hair from my eyes to rest behind my ear. I drew my lower lip to rest between my teeth, attempting to fight the swell of tears that rose to spill over my freckled cheeks.

We remained quiet for what seemed like hours. The whirl of the heater and the rhythmic ticking of a nearby clock scarcely broke the silence. My sobs were hushed. As a young child, when I was sick, my dad would let me color in his prized “Thundercats” coloring book. As I thought of it, the vibrant colors of my scribblings bleached into nothingness. The coloring book was currently sitting beside his hospital bed on a discarded meal tray, awaiting my next visit. I didn’t want it.

His favorite t-shirt was another possibility. I had been allowed to wear it as a nightdress. The faded cotton whispered against the back of my calves as I shuffled around in it, and I remembered it feeling like a hug as I slept. Finally, with no forethought, I mumbled through the bare part of my lips... “his coin collection.” I didn’t realize why it hadn’t immediately occurred to me. Nestled in a beautifully-crafted chestnut box in the top drawer of his dresser were the most prized pieces of his coin collection.

My mother moved to retrieve it, and I closed my eyes, listening

to the measured clicking of her heels against the hardwood, first away, then towards me. I knew she drew closer by the echo of her footsteps, and then she extended a small hand gripping what she placed in front of me.

The box creaked defiantly as I opened it, and my fingers lovingly brushed what lay inside. A humble wooden crucifix sat atop the polished gold of the coins, and the little brass Christ figure stared blankly up at me. I had never seen it before. I lifted a single gold coin from the pile, my fingertips slowly circling its surface. Closing the lid gently, I held onto the coin; then I pushed the box away and became acutely aware of the damp softness of my lashes tickling my cheeks as my eyes drifted closed. The sounds and scents of the room faded away, and I wandered into the safety of less painful memories.

I never knew the significance of his coin collection, only that on nights when I couldn't sleep, he would bring the box into my bedroom, and sit at the foot of my bed while I told elaborate stories of the archaic figures that were etched into each coin face. I would explain how some faded with age, or how they had become discarded by some distressed Roman temptress, and how her secret love had pocketed the coin, and buried it in a grove beneath a blossoming tree. I concluded it was there that my dad had found it, neglecting entirely the fact that he had never been to Rome. Every coin had endless, boundless stories, and although they frequently changed, he listened to them all.

Exactly six days later, I reached a small hand into the lightly polished mahogany of his casket, and tucked that same golden coin I had kept into the cool softness of his carefully folded hands. This way, I reminded myself, we each still had a piece of each other.

## Five Haiku

In arctic stillness,  
no breath stirs to cloud the air  
and stars are aglow.

\* \* \*

His sensuous eyes,  
the pale softness of her curves,  
in passion they meet.

\* \* \*

A baby is born.  
The embrace of life's first touch  
penetrates the heart.

\* \* \*

The sea calls her name,  
whispers an invitation,  
to bathe in its wake.

\* \* \*

Like the treble clef,  
he began a symphony.  
Gone, the music stops.

by Jillian Burdick



## A Caterpillar, Two Smoke Stacks, and Lindsay Lohan: Three Tools for My Trait

by April Smith

As a toddler and up to my present age, 23, I have been a person who could be recognized as gullible, naive, and trustful. I believe these personality traits are not negative aspects about my life, but similar to positive attributes, such as being nice and a “good person.” I think being a gullible person is a good element in someone’s life because youthfulness stays in the character, almost as if a child remains in the body.

Being gullible comes naturally for me. I was the trusting child who believed what she was told. However information was given to me, the origin did not matter. As long as there was not a reason to doubt the source, I would believe the data entering my ears and then to my brain. Following are three accounts when my gullible personality trait shown through.

\* \* \*

Every once in awhile, my dad will tell a true story about a small, lively girl around three or four-years-old with curly, bright red hair, and freckles sprinkled across her face and shoulders. I am this toddler. One sunny summer day, my mom, dad, and I were outside in our spacious side yard when Dad tried to show me a pale yellow, fuzzy bug, a caterpillar, which was inching along, almost blending in with the hairs on the back of his large hand.

Once I noticed the caterpillar on my dad’s hand, I screamed and ran away from my parents. I was frightened of the thing crawling on

his hand; believing this creature would soon start crawling on me. Not long after I started my flight from the hairy insect, Dad caught me and asked what was wrong.

I responded by asking him: "Do I really have to eat the caterpillar?" To my horror, he replied "yes." Being a trusting youngster, I believed him. After a long laugh from both my parents, who obviously found this hilarious, my dad told me he only wanted to show me the creature. Luckily for my turning stomach, I did not have to eat the fuzzy bug.

\* \* \*

A few years later when I was eight or nine-years-old, I was sitting on the back seat in our 1980's old four-door, grayish-blue, Cadillac Deville, when I noticed dark gray smoke developing from two tall primer-gray towers shaped like hourglasses. It was obvious to me that smoke like this was what caused pollution and turned skies gray. Steven, my brother who is two years younger than I, was sitting in the back driver's side seat beside me, while my mom was driving. We were on our way to the Michigan City Lighthouse Place Premium Outlet stores to go "window shopping" on a Sunday.

The dark smoke stood out against the pale blue sky with its magnificent bright yellow sun shining down on the dark blue waves belonging to Lake Michigan. I asked Mom why smoke was pouring out the giant towers. She responded with "That's where all the cigarette smokers go. The police put all of them together; so people like us won't receive their second-hand smoke."

In my mind, I imagined people from all over the world crammed into these towers. In my mind, they were walking around a huge smoke-filled room holding and smoking cigarettes. I

wondered how all these people could still breathe with the pollution. In the imagined room, I invented a trap door that allowed oxygen to only enter the tower. Then the thought came to my mind: why had only two towers been built for the smokers? I knew there were more smokers in the world than what the towers could fit. Why weren't our neighbors, Ruby and Roger, in these towers? They smoked all the time.

These were all thoughts being created in the mind of a young girl with a big and vivid imagination. At the time, my mom's answer made sense to me because I knew smoking was bad for people. The news about such a criminal sentence caused me to be thankful that neither my parents nor I smoked.

A few years later, when I became a teenager I realized that the two chimney stacks shaped like hourglasses along the Lake Michigan's shore were actually the coal cooling towers for NIPSCO (Northern Indiana Public Service Company,) an electric power business in the state. I suppose Mom told Steven and me the above fabrication because she knew we would believe her and stop asking questions.

\* \* \*

My gullible characteristic did not stop in my teens. It still remains at age 23. A few months ago this year, 2007, the television channel, ABC Family, was airing a movie marathon starring the notorious American celebrity, Lindsay Lohan. During a commercial break, a man making announcements for the television channel stated there would be a double feature showing the 1960's remake *Parent Trap*. This meant a double feature highlighting Lindsay Lohan.

As my fiancé, Jared, and I were sitting in the living room on our brown plaid couch watching the channel, I turned to him and said, "I wonder what happened to the other girl."

"You're joking, right?" Jared responded. "What other girl?"

"The girl who played the twin," I replied. I did not believe the following words exiting his mouth. He informed me there had not been another girl to play the twin in the movie and wanted to know where I had heard such a lie.

When the classic movie remake came out in 1998, I heard on television that another girl who looked like the child star, Lindsay Lohan, was to be the twin and the film producers used make-up to make it seem like the two girls were one person. I think I heard this on the Disney channel. My fiancé thought this was ridiculous and proved me wrong with the internet. Apparently, film producers and camera-people are able to film two shots at once, making it seem as if there were two Lindsay Lohans. This technology was unknown to me. After learning the truth, I felt foolish. The upsetting factor is I had believed this for nine years.

;

\* \* \*

Reminiscing, these stories make me laugh. Being gullible has been a part of my personality for a long time, practically my entire life. It does not surprise me that this will probably remain a small characteristic in me. I am a believer that "everything happens for a reason," no matter how small or insignificant the incident is, and maybe I am meant to be gullible. From thinking I will have to eat a fuzzy bug, to the smokers and the smoke pouring out of towers along Lake Michigan, to believing a fallacy on the television, all these memories have helped build my personality and character.

I am not as gullible as the little girl I was once. After realizing that certain explanations are ludicrous, age and experiences have changed that characteristic about me. After all, I am sure it would be against American laws to cram thousands of smokers into one or two buildings and caterpillars are not considered live snacks to the common person. Being trustful and naive keeps me from being jaded. Hopefully a small part of being gullible will allow the small red-haired girl to stay inside me and remain for the rest of my years.



Author April Smith is pictured sitting on her motorcycle. (See bio on page 73).

## **I Love Math**

I love math, yet I can hardly count  
All the theorems, conjectures,  
Symbols and notations  
That characterize this subject  
Make it a unique language.  
In the same way I love art  
I also love math:  
Its elegance and patterns  
Both continuous and geometric  
Add to its visual beauty,  
Thus connecting it  
To my artistic passion.  
I may not be mathematically-minded  
I can hardly do numbers in my head  
Yet my little understanding  
Of their numerous applications  
Such as “logarithms, permutations”  
And infinitely many more  
Make all math applications  
All the more interesting  
And tickling to my imagination.

by Josué Guerrero

## **From a Daughter to a Caregiver**

by Barbara Reddick

Often we are not prepared for the unexpected, but the day my father was diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease altered my life. I became a caregiver in addition to a daughter.

Most of my life, my dad was a delight to be around; he always had a smile on his face and a pleasant chuckle to follow. He was very active in the church, as well as his hobby of restoring antique tractors. His hobbies were family-oriented and were family fun time spent together. My dad was skilled with his handiwork, was mechanically inclined, and a talented carpenter.

One year for Christmas, he made wooden potato boxes for everyone in the family. He also helped my sisters and me with woodworking in 4-H. He had a knack for recycling things. For example: he built a pole barn from scratch using corrugated metal recycled from another barn. He did all the measuring and calculating to erect it. He was superior at math figures and took care of the financial paper work for Mom and him. He was quite independent and successful, but things changed in a way we couldn't believe.

He always had a job outside the home along with his projects at home. We would build things in the garage, work in the yard, and just enjoy each other's company. He and I especially loved to find discarded things such as power tools and make them work or at least try to make them useable.

Once we got this idea of making a paint stirrer with a drill. It was my job to hold the can while he worked the drill. It was one of

our failures as inventors, but it was funny. I tried to hold the can still, but the sheer force of the drill slopped the can around and paint splattered all over the workbench and tools. For a long time we had paint remnants on the garage tools. Often we were successful; sometimes though they ended up back in the trash. We enjoyed our times spent as inventors.

My dad was a good provider for his family and he stressed having the right tools for whatever job needed to be done. For instance, when I attended Cosmetology School, he went with me to purchase my needed equipment and was one of my subjects to practice my skills on. My dad also made sure when my sisters and I started a job that we had what was required, regardless of cost. He always stressed it was hard to be successful if we didn't have the tools we needed.

Most of my dad's career was spent driving his semi on long haul trips. Later, he was fortunate to get a dedicated run that allowed him to be home more. This change in his career as far as his hours was immense. He left early morning and was home every evening. This was so neat; we could spend evenings with him. It gave the grandchildren a chance to enjoy him and get to know him more and the rest of us to enjoy the fun moments. He attended school programs, grandparent's day at elementary schools, sports events and just spending time with his family. He also received many awards for his safe driving and was awarded Top Notch Driver by his company. He was honored for driving a million miles accident-free. Our lives were spent carefree and unsuspecting of the future to come.

Five years ago, I noticed a change in Dad. He often seemed confused and lost in thought. He just didn't seem like himself. He



had always been a stickler on safety with power tools in the garage. One day he and I were making some shelves for my house. He stuck his finger into the blade of the saw. For someone who is a safety person, this prompted me to think that something was definitely wrong. I mentioned it to my mom and my sisters. Mom shrugged it off saying he was just getting older and slower. He wasn't old; he was only 56-years-old.

Just within the last six months, I had transferred to a new doctor and I urged Dad to go to him. After an extensive examination, they sent him for more advanced testing at a neurology center. After two days of testing, a diagnosis of "Alzheimer's disease" was confirmed.

My family was in shock, but my dad seemed very calm and tranquil. We all felt powerless and at a loss for words, although my Dad spoke up quite cheerfully and said, "That was good, least I'm not crazy." Words could not express the effect of the devastating news we had received.

I knew about Alzheimer's disease and the fact that it is terminal. I felt so empty and scared for him. I was worried how he would react to the way his life was changing. He continued to drive for his job for two days, then he quit to start this new segment of his life.

Time progressed. We cared for him at home for four years, and I watched him as my mother continued to work her job. We took care of all his personal hygiene and other needs, I spent many days with him driving around the countryside and frequenting garage sales. He had a fascination with pictures, and I spoiled him. We bought anything he wanted, even some of the ugliest pictures known to man. We went to museums, tractor events, and out to eat. He enjoyed riding and seeing the countryside.

Eventually I had become a caregiver instead of a daughter. Not by anyone's fault, it was the hand life dealt us. This man who couldn't verbally communicate much or even recognize me all the time, was the man who took care of me when I was a child, holding my hand, soothing the bad times, and striving to make a good life for his family. I filled my Dad's days full of activities as he filled me with the joy of spending time together.

Eventually his illness progressed and we had to place him in a nursing home. This was a very traumatic experience for all of the family. I was very close to my Dad; he was my best friend. I vowed that I would never see him at the door crying to go home. When I left his locked Alzheimer's unit, I never looked back just in case he happened to be looking out the window at me. I didn't want to see him looking puzzled or forlorn as I walked away.

At first, I visited the nursing home every day, but then weaned myself down to a few days a week. He receives great care and seems happy despite the guilt and sadness I feel because we couldn't continue to care for him at home. I have difficult days that seem incomplete without him the way he used to be. I cherish all our good times; but I miss him terribly. When I see him, I don't know where he is. I hold on to his hand, hoping to hear some familiar words from him or a sign that he is in there.

My family attends the Alzheimer's support group, and have educated ourselves about the disease. My family also participates in the "Memory Walk for Alzheimer's" in hopes that someday researchers will find a cure for this debilitating disease that robs patient's minds and their families of them. The disease that has

riddled my dad's brain like Swiss cheese is not discriminating; it can attack any age or race.

Today I hold the hand of my best friend, my confidant, my father, and also a complete stranger. Often I ask myself why? If this is part of God's plan, I'm ready to understand what it means exactly. This has been one of the most complex times in my life. I am still very emotional when I think about Dad. I am still his daughter, but in person to him, I'm just someone who visits. I hope he remembers me, as I spend many hours looking into his empty blue eyes remembering that he is my Dad.

My Dad always told me that life could change in the blink of an eye and that we never know what the future will hold. My dad was diagnosed at the age of fifty-six, and now he is sixty-one years old. It seems as if it was just yesterday when we were at home together as a family laughing the time away. My time is now spent holding his hand, searching and hoping for that indication that he recognizes me. Sometimes he utters words and can say "okay," but his speech is leaving fast. My Dad is becoming a stranger to me. He is unable to express his feelings. He often does a crying-laughing gesture and it is confusing to me, but also makes me think he knows me and understands what is happening. Many times, I am by his side for his comfort, wishing to hear those reassuring words as he rubs my head and says, "It will be okay Barbie girl." My heart melts for him and every day I miss the feeling of being just his daughter.

## Sleepy Volcano

I am but a sleepy volcano  
Each day I see the sun and moon fight  
How to deal with them I never know  
For in public I lose much insight  
Days and nights of action can pass by  
And still I can remain unnoticed  
But the lava also adds up each day  
And before you know it I erupt  
Melting with lava all along the way.

by Josué Guerrero



## My Aching Feet

by Matthew B. Hayden

I was born with skinny, long feet with strange looking toes. In some ways my toes remind me of pretzels that overlap each other and are shaped funny. Even if I try to straighten my toes, they will go right back to their preferred positions which is overlapping and pushing on one another. My feet are the worst!

When I was twelve, I had surgery on my ankles and legs to help with straightening bones that had started turning from the effects of my Cerebral Palsy. The surgery helped my legs and ankles, but it positioned my feet to push-off on my toes as I'm walking. The pushing against my toes has made the overlapping even more. It is not painful, it is only ugly. My doctors are always telling me that it is not the appearance of my feet that I should worry about. They want me to focus on whether my feet are hurting me or not. There are times my feet hurt, but it is usually after a long day with a great deal of walking. I think that most people who walk too much have the same type of discomfort that I have.

My feet are very sensitive. Even getting my toe nails trimmed is a big ordeal for me. I don't like anyone touching my feet and I especially don't like my toes pulled apart from one another. It does not cause me pain, but it is a strange feeling. There is a tingling and tickling feeling that happens when my toes are separated from one another. The tingling and the tickling feeling can be psychologically painful, too.

My mom rubs my feet. I do like to have a foot massage that focuses more on the bottoms of my feet and not my toes. My mom

will rub the bottoms and tops of my feet so that they can relax. It is one of my favorite pastimes. She also likes to uncross my toes from one another. I have to run from her to keep her from messing with my toes. Because of how I walk, my feet ache at the end of a day. Getting my feet rubbed gently is the best, even though my feet are the worst.

Shoes are also challenging. Because my feet are strangely shaped, I must find shoes that will fit the shape of my foot. The shoes that fit my feet best are narrow shoes that slip on and off easily. I also have a challenge with my fine motor skills in my hands so it is always best that I have shoes that do not have shoe strings.

Shoes with zippers are the best for me. At 20, it is difficult to find shoes with zippers that don't have Bat Man or Ninja Turtles on them. Every store we go to we are always checking for shoes with zippers that are more grown-up looking. It is challenging working with my feet and sometimes it is expensive trying to cover my feet. The good news is that I have feet and actually enjoy the places they have taken me so far in my life.



## His Smile

by Karen Koger

There was something about the way he smiled at me. It wasn't any ordinary, passing smile, but one of intrigue and endearment. He sat at a table by the window that sunny, spring morning, staring intently at his opened laptop; engrossed in his work until the opening door caught his attention. His dark green, Henley shirt outlined the definition of his arms and chest, hinting at a dedicated workout routine. His shoulders straight and his back erect, this gentleman sat tall, exuding confidence as his hand reached for his cup of coffee.

Slightly balding, yet distinguished and ruggedly handsome, his lips met the cup as his eyes glanced, face following, to survey the door's motion. As I entered the coffeehouse and glanced around the room, my eyes went to his. I could not help but notice him. With full attention adjusted on me, he welcomed me with those enrapturing eyes. Within a moment's silent conversation, I accepted his warm greeting. His face slowly widened into an infectious smile that revealed a dimple, previously disguised in serious thought. His eyes glistened as the corners crinkled up in their own smile. In that brief moment I couldn't help myself; I was caught in his charismatic spell.

I found myself ignoring the coffee line and moving towards him instead. It didn't matter. My coffee would be made exactly as I liked it, sweet and creamy, steaming and waiting for me at this inviting table by which I now stood. On cue, he stood before me and offered a seat, only after embracing me in a hug; one of strength

and affection. As we sat down at that table together, the computer was closed and all attention was given to me.

It was not always this way. There was a time when this strong man left me standing in a doorway, young and naïve, wondering what I had done to send him away. My heart ached for his love and affection again, but he had other affairs that consumed that time once given only to me. Soon I felt completely forgotten by him. Nights found me weeping into my pillow, missing him dearly. Days had me looking occasionally at a familiar voice, only to be disappointed that it was not him. I longed to be reunited with this man that I loved, but I began to wonder if I would ever see him again. This was more than my heart could handle; how could he leave me this way? I was so young; I just did not understand.

Time passed slowly, as I tried to cope; I could not forget this wonderful, endearing man who belonged to me. One unsuspecting day, he had stood in that doorway with those eyes sad and apologetic. He had tried to smile at me, but found it hard as he hugged me tighter than I had ever been. Words poured out of his mouth now, but his eyes were all I needed to see — to know he was sorry for leaving me. It was not me, he assured as he brushed away the tears of hurt welling in my eyes, but a difficult time that needed healing. He made it clear he was not leaving me again. We talked about the worlds that kept us apart, me not moving very far from him looking at those eyes, while he smiled at me often.

Now years later, as I had grown and matured, I understood the complications that took him away. Sitting in the coffee shop, I felt his unconditional love for me, and for the next couple hours this handsome man held me captive in conversation, listening to my



every word. As we sipped coffee and shared our time together, he rarely took those eyes off me. And he smiled at me often.

There was something about the way he smiled at me, the kind of loving, welcoming smile only a father and daughter can share.



## **American Doll**

Platinum blonde

Six feet tall

Put my picture

On your wall

Pour me in a plastic mold

Never let me grow old

Tuck my belly

Enhance my chest

I don't have time

I feel so stressed

Suck the fat out of my thighs

So I won't have to exercise

Inject my eyes

And my lips

This sags down

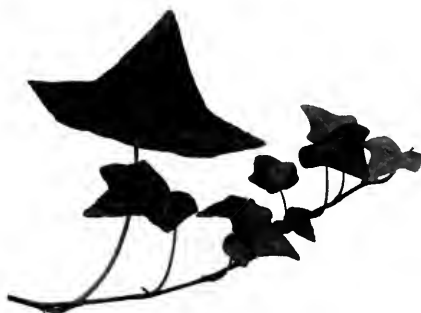
I need a nip

Oh my goodness, get a grip!

Reconstruct my crooked nose  
Dye my hair before it grows  
Pearly white  
Porcelain veneers  
Shaved off nearly seven years

Call the doctor  
Can I get in?  
I've just run out of heroin  
My nerves are shot...  
I have a lot  
But will I ever be content?

by Lana Seyfried



## Rediscovering Me

When asked  
if there is someone else,  
another love,  
I will reply,  
“Yes!”  
And when their eyes  
widen  
and brows raise,  
I will simply smile  
and walk away.  
Only I need to know –  
that  
“someone else”  
is me.

by Karen Koger



## Tenement Tear-Down

by Matthew Watson

Without the front half of its brick skin, it doubtless felt naked — violated to a certain degree. A massive conglomerate sphere was doing its best to smash the colossal right-angled monster asunder. The other dwarfed demolition machines tenaciously chipped away at the resilient and rooted adobe stronghold, its flakes of brick skin clattering the ground around it. Nature had indeed weathered the reddish-brown brick, but the immense five-story building stood unimpeded by environment or society — until now.

With a crash, the orb of desolation plunges through the 3rd story ceiling, and an echoing thunder bellows with the billowing dust and airborne debris. A silence overtakes devastation's playing field, awaiting the next at-bat. You wouldn't even recognize this building anymore — the dissected corpse spurting its entrails of water pipes and electric cords with each successive blow. Off to the side, a bulldozer assiduously claws at the remains of the once-statuesque structure like a vulture; the plummeting organs — a couch, the bathtub, a TV — all spill out onto the expanding pile of littered innards.

A piteous sigh vents through my tightened lips accompanied by a shrug of resignation. "All good things must come to an end." As I brood upon this, a brief but deafening cacophony erupts from the demolition site. A torrent of crumbling rubbish showers the ground as the rear wall collapses under its own weight — a suitable yet abrupt farewell to such an enduring landmark.

## Cheshire Gardens

In Cheshire Gardens the children lay in rumpled little piles,  
And battle with each other for their rumpled little smiles.  
They'll murder for a front row seat...for trick or treat.

Old man stretched out on a park bench staring at the sky  
He wonders what it's like up there where gods and angels fly.  
But newflash burns assault his mind...from ancient times.

Martyrs dot the hillside, performers show and tell  
All our blind, juvenile games.  
Echoes in the courtyard, pleas of fallen puppets,  
Justice, freedom, pain.

Muggers throw a penny in the statuary pond.  
Gophers dig with sharpened claws beneath the entrance lawn.  
The deaf are stealing from the dumb...in one lump sum.

Birds of prey and carrion are lined up on the wall,  
Spray-painted hearts and "I luv you's" and numbers to call.  
It's hard to find a real thing...just let it ring.

Children on the swing-set, newsman knows their names,  
And all their next of kin.  
Empty swings at daybreak, no one left to spy on,  
Or teach you how to sin.

by James King

## Tommy's Basketball

by Matthew B. Hayden

It's tough being a basketball. My day consists of being bounced, thrown, and shot at a hoop. However, because of the excitement, I actually enjoy being a basketball. The children in my neighborhood love me. I even get to stay overnight at some of my friends' homes, especially if I'm accidentally left behind by my owner.

Tommy is my owner and he is typically the one bouncing, throwing and shooting me, but he has many friends who like to join in. When a big game is scheduled in the neighborhood, the kids meet in Tommy's driveway where I am used to show who has the most skills in playing basketball.

During games there are ten pairs of hands bouncing me, throwing me, and shooting me at the hoop. Each pair of hands feels differently on my leather skin. Some players have a soft touch and know that when they play, the ball does not have to be man-handled. There are other players who play a little rougher. Their adrenalin begins to pump in their bodies as their excitement during the game begins to rise. That excitement makes them dribble me into the hardwood even harder. I prefer the softer touch; however, my leather skin helps me to bear the tougher touch.

Before becoming Tommy's basketball, I was a basketball in the National Basketball Association. This was a really tough job. I had the responsibility of being in several locations, and playing with many different teams, with hundreds of players. Some of the worst times for me were during championship games. Typically the winner of the championship would throw me into the rafters, or worse yet

throw me into the crowd. The fans would fight over me and pull and tug at me. This was frightening when really all I wanted was to be sitting on the basketball rack where I could rest.

One of my favorite places to play was Assembly Hall at Indiana University. The IU Hoosiers were an athletic team who could shoot the three-pointer and jam me through the hoop on a dunk. That was exciting for me as well as the fans. The fans there were wild and crazy. They were constantly cheering for me, especially when I went through the hoop.

The other fun place to play was Conseco Fieldhouse. Conseco has a great wooden floor that allowed me to show my bounce when coming down the floor. I have found that the better the wood on the floor, the better my bounce. The baskets at Conseco are perfect as well. I seemed to go through them easily and often. Lately the fans at Conseco Fieldhouse have not been showing up. The team is having some trouble on and off the court so the excitement of playing in a game is less because the excitement in Conseco Field House has gone away. I wish I was there to encourage my friends to play hard and fight for the win.

I remember in 1992, almost fifteen years ago when I was asked to be in the movie *Hoosiers*. This was a great opportunity for a basketball like me. There were cameras and actors all around me. The actors were really different from the real basketball players I got to play with most weekends in the National Basketball Association. They did not have the same skills in handling me as the real basketball players, but by the time the movie was almost complete they began to improve their skills. I was impressed with many of the actors as they shot the action scenes around one of the most



important games in high school history. Milan High School was an underdog team that won the State Championship in 1954. The players and coaching staff learned a great deal from one another during that season. The movie was a big hit and taught an important lesson about the work ethic and determination.

Being a basketball is exciting, and it is my job to be there for the team.



## Midnight Delicacy

Looming above me,  
it plans its descent.

Pirouetting down the smooth  
silken line, the eight-legged intruder  
closes in on its target: my face.  
the ticklish sensation sends  
signals to my subconscious:  
Wake up, please, wake up!

Unleashing the rope  
it hastily scurries toward  
my drooling abyss. Light on!  
Stop the attack before  
the bitter taste of victory  
and leftover body remnants  
linger in the stale morning:  
Wake up, please, wake up!

The subconscious jerks  
the mind into blurry consciousness.

Wide-eyes alert  
to its tingling movement.  
Hand frantically smacks it  
away to oblivion.

It surely was departed.  
Stay awake, please, stay awake!

The struggle for sleep is winning.

I must think logically.  
The creature was flailed faraway.

Perhaps it was only  
a dream of suggestion.  
Such a delicacy thwarted  
this night. Lights out!  
Just sleep, please, just sleep!

by Karen Koger



## **Solution**

Instantaneous solution  
To my mind's delusion  
Walking in confusion  
Fighting your intrusion  
Look for resolution  
From your illusion  
Down to absolution  
I've found the solution

by Jessica Powers

## **My Life's Dance**

Fairytale hero  
Fairytale romance  
I am the protagonist  
Of this  
My life's dance

by Jessica Powers

## “867-5306”

### *A one-act play*

by Matthew Watson

Characters: **Milton**, who calls the number given to him at a club. **Daphne**, the unsuspecting recipient of the call.

**Milton:** (telephone ringing) (*tentatively*) Hello, is this...umm... Lisa? We met at the club about a week ago.

**Daphne:** Lisa? No, there's no Lisa here.

**Milton:** Are you sure; you sound like Lisa. (*pushes glasses up on nose*) Remember me? I'm the guy who had the green sweater-vest on sittin' at the bar. You gave me your number — remember?

**Daphne:** Umm.....not really. This is Daphne. You must have dialed the wrong number; what number did you call?

**Milton:** (*A few seconds of rustling and crinkling paper*) Her number is...**867-5309**.

**Daphne:** (*A brief silence, and then a giggle escapes from Daphne's end*)

**Milton:** What! What's so funny?

**Daphne:** Nothing, nothing; I just didn't realize that gullible people like you still existed, what with Darwin's theory and everything. My number is 867-5306. You must have pressed the 6 by accident.

**Milton:** Oh...(*stunned silence*)

Boy, do I feel dumb....Well, I'm sorry about all this; I'll let you go. I have a young lady to call.

**Daphne:** I wouldn't bother.

**Milton:** Why not?

**Daphne:** Let's just say that she doesn't have the same feelings for you that you think.

**Milton:** Are — are you sure? How can you tell?

**Daphne:** You've never heard of Tommy Tutone have you?

**Milton:** (*confused*) Tommy **Who**-Tone?

**Daphne:** Wow, never mind. Your Lisa friend gave you a fake phone number. Trust me; I've used that one a few times myself.

**Milton:** (*stunned*) Really? I didn't see that one coming. I thought we hit it off pretty well.

**Daphne:** (*sarcastically*) Uhhh huhhh. Did she seem in sort of a hurry to leave?

**Milton:** Come to think of it, she did get a phone call after I started talking about my *Three Stooges* DVD collection. Turns out, her mom was having a heart attack, and she had to leave. She grinned as she left me her number, then dashed out the door. (*shrugs sadly*) I hope her mom's OK.

**Daphne:** (*appreciative*) Heart attack...nice...I've never thought of that one. Oh,<sup>5</sup> and I'm sure she's fine. Um, did you say *Three Stooges*?! I LOVE the *Three Stooges*; I used to watch them all the time as a kid. I haven't seen 'em in years.

**Milton:** (*reflecting*) Maybe, she just wrote her number down wrong. She **was** in quite a hurry...

**Daphne:** No, take my word for it; she wrote it down exactly how she wanted it. (*pauses*) So...**Milton** is it?...What do you do when you're not watching Larry, Moe, and Curly?

**Milton:** I'm a schoolteacher, actually — fourth grade. Sometimes I feel like I'm watchin' an episode of the *Three Stooges* in my classroom. So what do **you** do when you're not answering phone calls from strangers?

**Daphne:** (*chuckles*) I work in a toll booth on State Road 37. Doesn't pay much, but I meet the most delightful people in my profession.

**Milton:** Ha ha. Same here, I — (*timer dings in background*) Aw, shoot! my Hot Pockets! Hey listen, it was really great talkin' to ya, Daphne.

**Daphne:** Ya, maybe we'll catch some *Three Stooges* sometime.

**Milton:** I would love that. How's next Saturday sound?

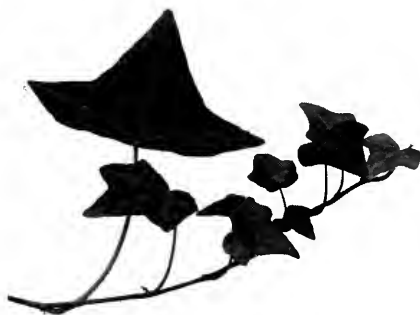
**Daphne:** Perfect. Don't forget to call. You know the number.



## Hard to Predict

Since I haven't any seismographs,  
To enable me to predict  
When you may erupt next,  
I am choosing,  
To remain  
Off the island  
On which,  
You are located

by Kimberly Simmons





## Tall Enough

by Karen Koger

“How tall are you anyway?”

“So, are you six-feet tall?”

These are two of the questions. I have heard most of my life. These are questions I never hear asked of the person standing next to me, or anyone of average height. Am I a freak of nature? Perhaps, I could wear a t-shirt that says, “To answer your question, yes, I almost peak at six-feet tall. Now stop wondering!”

It may sound as if I am resentful of my high altitude. Perhaps I’ve grown a bit self-conscious, as I have maintained this lankiness since eighth grade, some thirty years ago, enduring such nicknames as: “Beanstalk,” “Bean pole,” and my favorite, “Stretch.” During high school, I usually towered over most boys, limiting my dating options. It was not common to see a vertically-challenged boy dating someone a head taller than he, and requiring a step-stool or tip-toes just to sneak that adolescent kiss goodnight. I envied my shorter friends who seemed to flourish in the dating world.

Young adulthood didn’t improve for possible suitors. The tall men seemed to prefer cute, petite types. This seemed unfair and I blamed my dating woes and lack of confidence on my height. Most men I dated, and even my husbands (currently number two) were all shorter. Although I subconsciously slouched to even up that extra inch or two difference, they didn’t seem to be deterred by the fact we did not fit society’s norm. I gave up heels in the ongoing effort to

appear shorter. I wore flats. It was probably a good thing; my knees, back, and feet didn't like those uncomfortable stilettos anyway.

I had a reprieve from blaming my height. High-heeled shoes hurt my feet, and the pain worked its way up to my knees and eventually affected my back. Although tall people tend to have more joint and back problems, this discomfort was a direct result of those darned heels. Once my feet were out of the high-rise shoes, the problem was solved. At least I had a justifiable reason for wearing plain, ordinary flats. My height was not the culprit this time.

Vertical-giftedness runs in my family. My mom is five-foot-eight, and my dad is six-foot-four. My older brother, Dan, is about six-foot-six, and my younger sister, Linda, and younger brother, Mike, both are in the five-foot-eight range. Aunts and uncles also have a range of height, from slightly taller to, "Wow! You are tall!" My high-rise body fits right in with my family members.

This genetic gift from my family has had advantages, too. I usually don't require assistance at stores when needing an item from the top shelf, and I have helped many short-reaching customers get what they need. I have been quite the athlete in softball, securing first base as my position, and amazing many on my catching range. I earned my nickname "Stretch" with my amazing softball talent; the only nickname with a fond association. Family members affectionately tell me, when separated in a crowd; they only need to look for my head above the rest to find me.

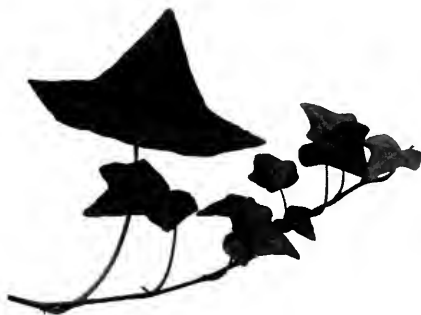
I've learned to enjoy sticking out in a crowd. Although most people do look up to me, I've never been the type to look down on

someone else. I have worked on my own height insecurities and as I've grown and matured; I've learned to stand tall with shoulders back and confidence held high.

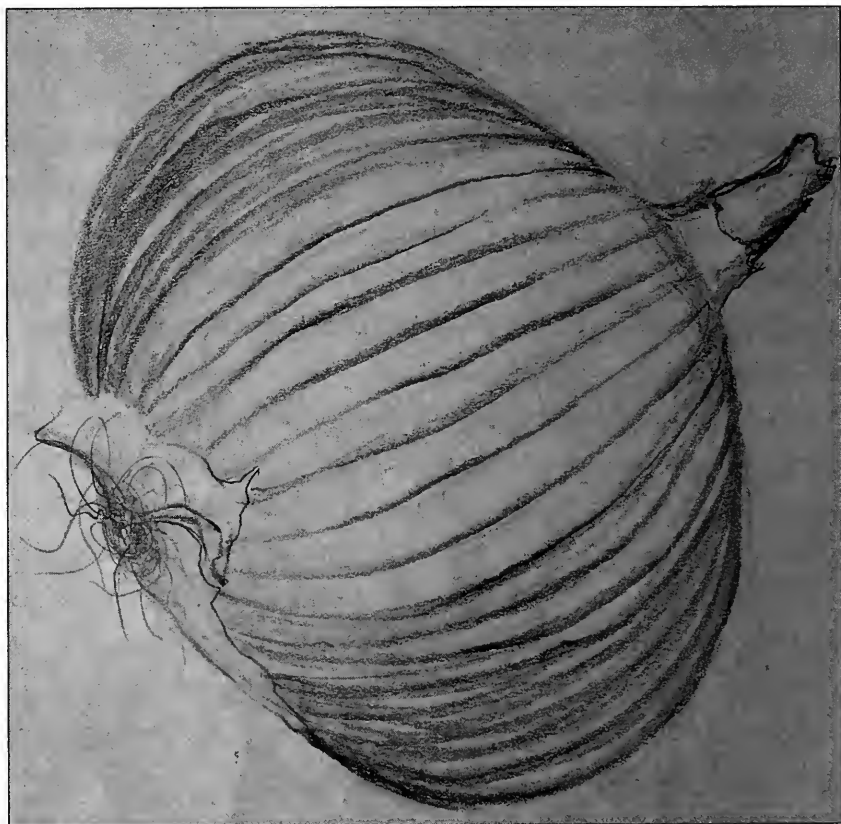
So, how tall am I?

In eighth grade I measured around five-foot-ten-inches. In a recent measuring with the help of my daughter, Emily, I topped out at five-foot-ten-and-one-half inches. Perhaps not as tall as everyone thinks I am after all.

However, when I enter or leave a convenience store, I duck — just a little!



## Onion



by Cari Nicholson

## **A Born Motorhead**

by David Philpot

When I was a little boy, I had an immense interest in cars and driving. Even before I was in first grade, I imagined myself driving. While I was in kindergarten I drew cars for a class project; I drew the same car over and over again trying to make it perfect. My mother later made a border of those cars around the perimeter of our kitchen walls.

When on errands with my mother I would mimic her steering, braking, and shifting, even though I was sitting in the front seat, on the right side of the car. I remember her letting me steer the car as I sat next to her; this was exciting for me.

Later, whenever the family went anywhere, I looked out the window of the car and imagined myself riding a motorcycle paralleling us on the terrain next to the road. I idolized and was a huge fan of famous motorcycle daredevil Evel Knevil; remembered for his attempt at jumping the Caesar's Palace water fountain in Las Vegas, on a high-performance Harley-Davidson Sportster.

At the age of 10, I kept myself occupied when on road trips with the family with fantasies of making jumps over rivers, overpasses and any obstacle in my path. Maintaining the same speed as we were driving proved to be quite challenging. My younger sister Michelle would sometimes try to distract me from my world of make believe and I would envision myself wiping out, blaming her. "Oh you made me crash," I would say. I cannot overemphasize how disturbed I was with this obsession with driving and riding motorcycles.

Being 15-years-old has its challenges; one of them is being cool. I truly believed that being a licensed driver was the epitome of being cool. I might even be able to take a girl on a date. When I became the required age to start driver's training, I had what I thought to be a great amount of experience, like the fake fantasy motoring next to mom as a tot. I had seen where people had made mistakes and tried to learn from them. I was ready, or so I thought.

The next step was to start Driver's Education, an after school class. To be eligible, I had to have "C's" or better in school. This gave me the incentive to do well. I remember trying to stay focused on my school studies so I would get average or better grades, the minimum requirement for admission to the Driver's Education School.

My grades came in and I passed all my freshman courses, so I applied to driving school. I was 15-years-old. The classes were on Saturdays at Bentley High School (one of the three high schools in Livonia, Michigan, a suburb of Detroit). The first thing we covered was the written portion; this was the actual Secretary of State Driver's Handbook. This took about a month or two. Once the class had learned all the requirements in the Handbook for operating a motor vehicle on Michigan roadways, the last step was the practical portion. This was where the poor instructor graded our actual driving skills. This was done with up to four other students with whom I went through training.

Having been so excited about driving, I was a little scared to drive in front of other students. That fear of failure or embarrassment was eating away at me. I knew I could do it; I just lacked the confidence in myself, due to not having much real road time. In

this class, a time was set aside to give us new drivers a chance to get comfortable behind the wheel. We would go out on Saturday mornings and each student would get about a half an hour driving; then another student would have his or her turn. When the training was over we had a week to prepare for the final driving exam.

I scored a 95%. The instructor signed me off and issued me the student driver permit. Having the beginner's permit allowed me to drive with any adult willing to subject himself or herself to that kind of excitement. My poor father was not willing to take that risk; so my loving mother did. I begged to be allowed to do the driving when a grocery or other driving need availed itself. This may not have happened as much as I would have liked, but my mother let me drive enough to get some practice.

My dad was instrumental in teaching me how to ride motorcycles. In the driver's education class, I inquired about the motorcycle requirements and the instructor referred me to the Secretary of State (Michigan's version of the Bureau of Motor Vehicles or License Branch). There I was given a similar guide, but for motorcycle riders. Because there was no motorcycle rider's education course at that time, I had to learn the material on my own. There was never a more willing and motivated student. I studied that booklet frontward and backwards, and could quote from it from memory.

My father allowed me to ride his street bike to get the needed skills to pass the state test. My dad was really cool, letting me ride his Honda 750, which was the fastest production motorcycle available in 1973. I had ridden on the back with him to Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, to visit an old friend of his. That was good training,

even though I was not doing the actual piloting. We also had another motorbike; it was my mother's, a Honda 90 that was street legal. The Honda 90 is what I rode when we would go out for a rider-training session with my dad.

The day I turned 16-years-old, I was ready to get my license. Enthusiastically I scheduled both the written and practical exams, for drivers and for motorcycle riders on the same day. When that day came my father allowed me to use his motorcycle, since I had to bring my own bike for that part of the test.

I got there early to be certain I would be first in line. I felt like I was asking a great deal of the state workers to do so much for me in a day. Normally they would do one, the automobile, and then reschedule the motorcycle written and practical for another day. I experienced some fear waiting to find out the results of the written tests. My mind was working overtime pondering the "what ifs?"

After 45 long minutes I was notified that I had passed the written exams. I was especially happy to hear I had done well on the written tests. I was then routed into the practical examiners' area. All I had left was the actual driving test with the state examiner and motorcycle rider's test.

The car portion was done using the state provided automobile. They charged extra for the use of their car, but that is how they did it then. I suppose the state had requirements for their examiner's cars. The examiner asked me to make a four-mile square and return to the parking lot. As I recall it was a Saturday and traffic was not a factor. Everything went well in complying with the examiner's road test. I passed!



There was an obstacle course in the back parking lot for the motorcycle portion. The 1971 Honda 750 has over 100 horsepower, way more than what was needed to go through the obstacle course in a parking lot. I was required to show proficiency in turning: using hand and arm signals, turning and stopping. I also was required to show control of operation without putting my feet down, while riding around some tightly placed traffic cones. The purpose was to weed out those who do not have control of their bikes. I did well, even on that big street bike.

The picture was taken and my license was mailed to me. (It took 6 weeks to arrive.) When I left the Secretary of State testing facility there on the corner of Inkster Road and Five Mile Road in Livonia, Michigan that day I felt like I had really accomplished something. Most of all, I thought I could not be cooler having a driver's license with a motorcycle endorsement at sixteen-years-old.

But I found out I still had work to do to be noticed by the young ladies.



## Three Haiku

Rose in the sunlight  
Quelled by the viny kudzu  
Petals lie wilted.

\* \* \*

Fleeting sight of you  
On a mediocre day,  
Routine made magic.

\* \* \*

Can heart's ease be found  
From a drink of the Lethe  
In oblivion?

by Kimberly Simmons



## Dad's Playhouse

by Karen Koger

When I walked through the door of dad's "playhouse," flecks of wood and sawdust scurried through the air; then settled on every surface. The high-pitched sound of the saws bellowed as the wood forced its way through the hungry blade's teeth. That sweet aroma of fresh-cut wood filled the garage. Upon noticing me, and after the usual pleasantries, dad was eager to show me his latest creation. As we toured the various saws and tools, he demonstrated how each one contributed to the showpiece being constructed. His strong, sturdy hands — his most powerful tools — demonstrated how the pattern pieces in the rudimentary stage would develop into the final product. His incredible how-to mind was able to see the end result of such raw beginnings.

He had told my three siblings and me countless times how he did not fare well in school with academic knowledge; yet those hands and that mind could take any broken item, whether mechanical, electrical, architectural, or stationary, and make it work again. He envisioned and carried out a complete transformation of our home, inside and outside, remodeling rooms, changing doorways, adding handmade cabinets, making two rooms where there once was one, and even re-siding the three-story home, then adding a new back porch. Beautifully finished furniture pieces rivaled any sold in a fancy furniture store. What he lacked in fundamental, scholastic knowledge, dad more than made up for in his artistic creativity with his mind and hands, and his garage filled with tools.

Whenever one of us would ask mom the usual question, “Where’s dad?” the answer was already known. Dad was in his garage, planning the next masterpiece.

Today the garage is not as busy as it once was; tools run infrequently, although sawdust still lingers. His talents and craft are slowly being robbed by the neurological, degenerative disease called Parkinson’s. His hands that once performed structural feats, now struggle to button a shirt. Dad’s mind is not as adept as it once was, and his body and feet are unsteady. However, that wonderful, woody fragrance still permeates the air: a scent that affectionately reminds me of the works of art created by my dad in his “playhouse.”



## **Mayor Greg Ballard: A Review**

by Christyann Eliezer

I jumped at the opportunity to hear our new mayor speak on January 26, 2008, at the Ivy Tech Community College Speaker Series in the North Meridian Center in Indianapolis. I had heard many good things about Mr. Greg Ballard. I had followed him in the newspaper and the television news and debates. His ideas seemed revolutionary to our city and I simply could not miss hearing all the coming changes from the very man himself.

When I entered the auditorium I was surprised at what I found. Until now, I had not seen the auditorium. I had envisioned a large auditorium like my high school, packed with hundreds of people and with balcony seating. I did not realize this program would be a relatively private event in which only the Ivy Tech faculty, students, staff, and a few guests could come. I would guess that there were a little fewer than 150 people all together. For the smaller auditorium than what I had envisioned, we were packed. I felt lucky.

Finally the moment I waited for came. The military man who was changing our city in some dramatic ways was going to speak. I was surprised yet again because as he began to speak I noticed that he is not a dramatic speaker. He did not seem to get excited and use wild hand gestures as he spoke, much like I thought he would. He never raised his voice in a whirlwind of emotions. He was calm, methodical, and open about his plans as mayor. He knew exactly what he wanted to do in Indianapolis and had already put his ideas into motion by making appointments to meet with key people about his plans. It was not how he said it, but what he said that was

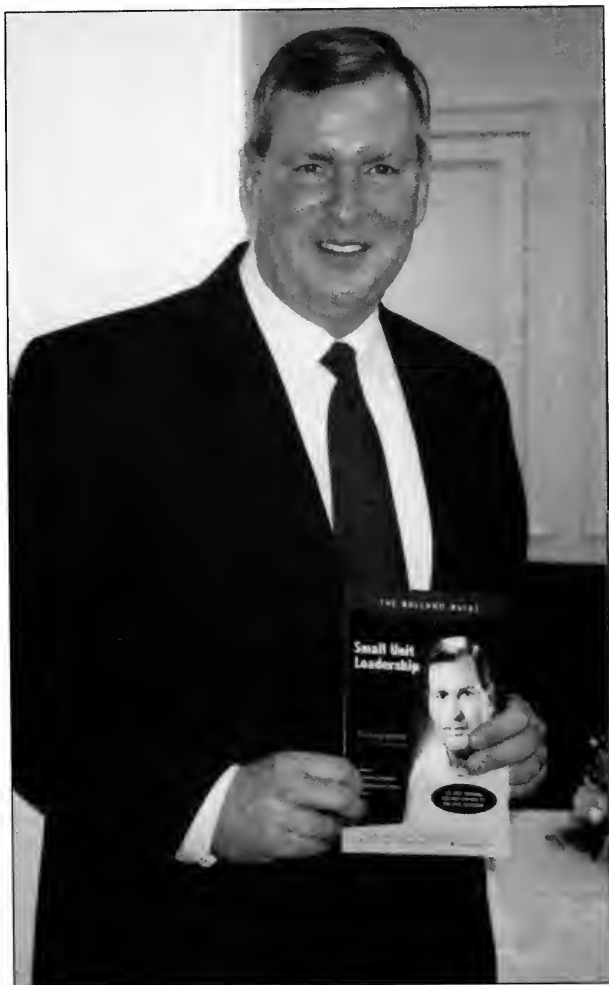
amazing. With the exception of the occasional sip of water from his water bottle, he didn't move around the stage. He wore a plain red tie that was reminiscent of Donald Trump's.

If I had to title his speech, I would have called it "The Plan for Connecting." He started off talking about our public safety workers and the lack of communication among them. He stressed the importance of education, but asked only for those in the audience who want to help him "to go tutor a child."

I could relate to what he was saying about how he got the impression from people that the high crime rate was some form of normal for the people in the neighborhood. I fully agreed with his statements that the people should stand together for what is right.

He spoke about the unemployed looking for jobs and the companies in need of hard workers. Sensing some kind of disconnection between these two groups of people, he is seeking "to bridge the gap" between those who want to work and those who want to hire good workers.

I was not surprised at how much he brings from his military experience into the office. Based on the interviews about him that I have read, I had the impression he would. I believe this man will do wonderful things for Indianapolis, especially because he does not listen to the voices who tell him he **can't** do them.



Mayor Ballard presented a copy of his book *Small Unit Leadership: The Ballard Rules, Volume I* to the Ivy Tech NMC Library. In it he wrote: "To the Ivy Tech Students, Work hard and seize opportunities – Enjoy the book." (photo by BLG)



The Soldier and Sailors Monument was created by Baking & Pastry Arts student Sue Welch. Made primarily out of gingerbread, all of the components are made from edible substances. The Monument was created by Sue for a final project in her Advanced Decorating and Candies class in the fall semester of 2007. Sue won first place with this entry in the 2007 Conner Prairie Gingerbread Competition. The Monument was on display on January 26, 2008 for Mayor Ballard's talk. *(photo by BLG)*



## Contributors' Biographies

### Jillian Burdick

Jillian is a dual Nursing and Journalism major at Ivy Tech Community College. She plans to incorporate her love for writing into her passion for medicine by writing for medical journals about premature birth and neonatology. Like many aspiring writers, she hopes something she writes will someday change the world.

### Christyann Eliezer

I graduated from Calvary Chapel Bible College, Indianapolis, Indiana, in May of 2005. Currently, I am a student at Ivy Tech Community College of Indianapolis, Indiana. I work for K.I.D.S. Inc., a not-for-profit organization that works with inner city youth.

### Josué Guerrero

I am a 19-year-old Ivy Tech student from Colombia, South America. I have lived in the United States since the year 2000, and I currently plan to become an art teacher for college students. A proud Ivy Tech student, I attend the institution to complete the necessary mathematics pre-requisites to be accepted at a four-year college.

### Matt Hayden

I completed my Associates of Science degree in Business Administration in December 2007 at Ivy Tech Community College. I am currently a junior at IUPUI studying Sports Management. The work you find in *New Voices* came from my experiences in life.

**James King**

Sometimes I spot something unique. Sometimes it is an attitude. Sometimes it is an atmosphere. That is inspiration and a chance to say something that has never been said before. This can be the only real goal of writing; everything else is just repetition.

**Karen Koger**

Hmmm...a bio in fifty words or less about a confident, compassionate, Christian woman, proud single-parent of one, aspiring writer and artist, student, full-time sales associate all rolled into one person, who at forty-seven-years-old (counts as one word) is rediscovering her gifted passions and self? I will certainly do my best!

**Deelyn Lynch**

Full-time student, home school mom and wife. Returned to school after a 16-year hiatus to raise children. Working toward a bachelor's degree in Visual Communications with a Web Development concentration. Hoping to graduate before the oldest starts college too!

**Cari Nicholson**

Creativity is as vast as your limitations. On the unexpected places of the "proverbial box" is where I love to be! In my ideas, life and personality, I embrace the possibilities of change as a new adventure. I question the limitations placed and the probabilities of differences. I am the "questioneer" of why and what if?

**David Philpot**

David Philpot's dream is to help people with chronic pain through physical therapy. He currently is working on an associate of applied science degree. David's Ivy Tech core class credits have been successfully articulated into his Galveston College transcript. He hopes to be accepted at University of Texas Medical Branch.

**Jessicah Powers**

I am a student of biological sciences, creative writing, and visual communications (which is my major). I am a whirlwind of random ideas and an eclectic mish-mash of fantastical thoughts. In my spare time I read, write, raise tropical fish, and train to be a mixed martial artist.

**Barbara Reddick**

I am a 41-year-old single parent who has decided to attend college and obtain an Associate Degree in computer science. I am a first time college student and enjoying the many experiences at Ivy Tech Community College. My goal is to live life to the fullest and have a successful career.

**Candice Reeves**

Born in Terre Haute, Indiana, she grew up in Indianapolis. She is a student at Ivy Tech Community College, where she is studying to be a Registered Nurse. She hopes to one day to become an obstetrician-gynecologist, as well as a published author, and open a dance school.

**Lana Seyfried**

Thank you for considering my writings for the *New Voices* publication. I am a 33-year-old single mother pursuing an ASN at Ivy Tech Community College. I am proud to be the first woman in my family to pursue a college degree. Poetry has always served as a wonderful outlet for me to express my creative side, and it is also a wonderful tool I use for working out my feelings.

**Kimberly Simmons**

The most adequate way I can describe my relationship with writing is the pen and the paper pad are doubtlessly my two most reliable friends.

**April Smith**

My career goal is teaching high school students. My hobbies include reading, shopping, riding my motorcycle, and currently planning my wedding which is scheduled for June, 2008. I love animals almost as much as I love my fiancé. After reading this booklet, I hope you enjoy my piece of writing.

**Rebecca Snyder**

I am 52-years-old. I am in my freshman year at Ivy Tech taking all of my prerequisite courses. I am going into Accounting and Business Administration.

**Matthew Watson**

A meager fifty words can not begin to illustrate me. For instance, how could I express my life in pithy type? The key words would be soccer, college, editing, and TV. So as I near the fifty mark my answer is a nifty one - Instead of fifty I'll just use fifty-one.

## Editors' Biographies

### Micah Gerald

I am a 23-year-old Ivy Tech Community College student pursuing my Associate's Degree in Business. I plan to obtain a bachelor's degree as well. I was home schooled since the third grade. I am the only one out of my three sisters and three brothers to attend a college. I have had difficulty adjusting. However, I have met fellow students who have made me feel welcome. I have also met several professors from whom I have learned to understand. They have earned my respect and gratitude.

### Carly A. Guest-Williams

I am a 24-year-old college student from London, England. I am excited about graduating from Ivy Tech in May 2008 with my General Studies degree. I feel honored to participate in this edition of *New Voices*. Thank you Ivy Tech for all the wonderful opportunities.

### Tammy Morris

I am a 41-year-old mother of two beautiful teenage daughters. I am also the owner of a precious golden doodle puppy named Jasper. I spend my time as a courier for Federal Express and as a first-year college student. Although returning to college has proven to be challenging, it has also been one of the most exciting things I have ever done.

## How to Submit Your Manuscripts and Art Work to *New Voices* 2009

It is a good idea to have an instructor or someone from the Writing Reading Learning Centers critique and edit your manuscript. When ready, bring or send via office mail two copies of your manuscript and one disk in Microsoft Word, 12 point, Times New Roman to NMC 552. You may also email your submissions to [jlafoure@ivytech.edu](mailto:jlafoure@ivytech.edu) as attachments.

Leave your name off one copy of your manuscript.

Label your disk or include with your email your name, title of your work, and your instructor's name. Your disk should have your titled manuscript, your name, and a mini-bio of yourself in 50 words or less. These should be two separate files. Name the bio: "Your Last Name, BIO." Nothing else should be on your disk.

Personal essays, short stories, poetry, research papers, and expository writing of all types are accepted. (Identify the type of writing you are submitting.) Manuscripts of four to five pages of prose or less will be given first consideration.

Original black and white or color artwork (of an appropriate size) may also be submitted. Cover designs are welcome. Follow the same guidelines as for the written manuscript.

You **must** include information about how to reach you: address, phone numbers, email addresses, etc. on the manuscript with your name.

NO work will be returned. By giving the manuscript or art work, etc. to the instructor or a faculty editor for this publication, you are granting permission to publish.

Manuscripts and art work are chosen by a student editorial board. Authorship is not revealed until the material is accepted.

Any unpublished manuscripts or art work not published may be considered for a future issue.

Deadline for Spring 2009 issue is November 1, 2008.

\* \* \*

If you are interested in being a student editor, contact Professor Judith LaFourest, NMC 552, [jlafoure@ivytech.edu](mailto:jlafoure@ivytech.edu), 921-4571.

## The Ivy Tech School Song

Oh raise a toast to Ivy Tech  
let all our voices sing  
of friendships strong and futures bright  
through knowledge that you bring.  
Our lives have been made richer here  
as we progress in our careers  
joining mind and hands and heart  
Ivy Tech where futures start.

Sing loud and strong of Ivy Tech  
and let our motto be  
we're proud to tell you all about  
the college that worked for me.  
And as we go our separate ways  
with fondness we'll recall these days  
joining mind and hands and heart  
Ivy Tech where futures start.

